



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## NWBCCC GOES BRONXWIDE



Photo by Sile Moloney

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Vanessa Gibson (center right) presents a proclamation to Sandra Lobo, executive director of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (center left) in the company of Meisha Ross Porter (left), and another attendee at the organization's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala held at Manhattan College in Fieldston on Friday, Oct. 18, 2024.

**By ARIEL PACHECO**

At its 50th anniversary gala held at Manhattan College in Fieldston on Friday, Oct. 18, the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) marked the end of an era, announcing its merger with

the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI), a partnership that will expand the two group's collective reach across the entire borough.

During the gala, NWBCCC celebrated its 50-year history with a timeline of videos, pho-

tos and stands displaying its work over the decades. One gala exhibit from 1974, read, "With disinvestment, redlining, abandonment, and fires wiping out thousands of buildings in the South Bronx and rapidly spreading northwards,

local residents united with pastors in ten Catholic parishes, and soon [recruited] other religious and community leaders to form NWBCCC."

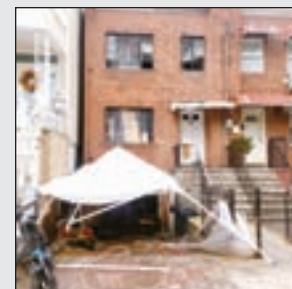
NWBCCC "unites diverse peoples and institutions to  
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# P.S. / M.S. 20 Hosts High School Fair

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Norwood's P.S. / M.S. 20 - P.O. George J. Werdann, III hosted a high school fair on Friday, Nov. 8, in conjunction with the Office of the Bronx Borough President, providing prospective students with the opportunity to connect with representatives from over 50 schools.

Eighth Grade students and their parents / guardians were invited to the event, while 7<sup>th</sup> Grade students who wished to attend had to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Michael Pontebbi, principal of P.S. / M.S. 20, located at 3050 Webster Avenue next to the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, said, "I want to give other schools, not just mine, the opportunity to be able to show off their schools and everything they have to offer the kids. More opportunities [are] more opportunities for success for students as well. So, the more schools they get to know and the more options they have, the better off it is."

Pontebbi said they had about 160 students from P.S. / M.S. 20 attend the fair along with about 200 students from other schools who came to the fair, bringing the total to around 450 students. Pontebbi also said about 60 schools were represented at the fair, which is an increase from last year's fair, also hosted by P.S. /



All photo by Ariel Pacheco

**EXPLORATIONS HIGH SCHOOL** representatives, including Giselle Malavez, attend the High School Fair at P.S. / M.S. 20 at 3050 Webster Avenue in Norwood on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024.

M.S. 20, which had about 40 schools.

"We have a lot of schools in the area, so we partner with them to share our space because at the end of the day, District 10, especially, but of course New York City, has so much to offer. I think families and parents need to know that."

Pontebbi added that the schools that came to the fair were mostly from The Bronx, but schools from around the City also showed up. While a majority of the schools were public ones, a few were charter schools as well.

"It's all about the kids," Pontebbi

said. One student said they were looking to learn more about all the schools in attendance and was open to hearing them all out. "I don't have any specific schools in my head right now but I am just going around the tables to learn more about all of the schools here," the student said.

Another student called the experience a fun one. "It's nice to have everything in one place. It's fun and its exciting."

Explorations Highschool was one of the schools at the fair, represented by Giselle Malavez, the school's 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade guidance counselor.

"It's important for us to speak to students and invite them to our school so they get to know what we are doing," Malavez said. "We want the students to know what we are doing in our school and to come visit us and give us a chance to provide them their education."

The High School for Health Careers and Sciences was also at the fair. Joanny Santana, the school's guidance counselor, said it was a good opportunity for both the schools and students alike. "It's an opportunity for the students to explore the variety of high schools in New York City and it also gives us the opportunity to showcase our school as well, and for them to figure out what's the right fit for them."



**STUDENTS RECEIVE INFORMATION** from Bronx Legacy High School at the High School Fair held at P.S. / M.S. 20 at 3050 Webster Avenue in Norwood on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024.



**STUDENTS RECEIVE INFORMATION** from Validus Preparatory Academy at the High School Fair held at P.S. / M.S. 20 at 3050 Webster Avenue in Norwood on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024

This is a revised version of the story first published in our Oct. 31st edition.

# Are Bronx Veterans Being Supported?

By FAHIMA DEGIA

As veteran voters and other voters cast their ballots in this year's presidential election, we take a look at the support and resources available to Bronx veterans. On Oct. 29, officials from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) said that the department delivered more care and benefits to more New York veterans, survivors, and their families than ever before in 2024.

"Veterans deserve the very best from VA and our nation, and we will never settle for anything less," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We're honored that more Veterans are getting their earned health care and benefits from VA than ever before, but make no mistake, there is still work to do," adding in part that the VA would continue to work to earn the trust of all those it served.

VA officials said this year the VA delivered over 3.7 million health care appointments to NY veterans, and that 10,197 New York veterans enrolled in VA health care. They said 146,376 NY veterans received compensation, and 5,215 received pension benefits this year, representing an estimated \$3.5 billion and \$70 million in earned benefits, respectively.

They said the VA processed 58,789 disability benefit claims for NY veterans, with an overall grant rate of 62.9%, provided no-cost emergency health care this year to more than 1,190 NY veterans in acute suicidal crises, and 4,025 NY survivors received pension benefits this year, representing an estimated \$39.2 million in earned benefits.

VA officials said 14,365 NY spouses and dependents received Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, representing an estimated \$291.5 million in earned benefits, and the VA also interred 4,349 veterans in the VA's national cemeteries in New York in 2024.

They said 14,797 NY women veterans

received compensation, representing an estimated \$383.5 million in earned benefits, 1,159 NY women veterans enrolled in VA health care, and the VA now has more women veterans enrolled in its health care system than ever before.

At the Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) veterans affairs committee meeting held in Bedford Park's Tracey Towers on Oct. 16, the main agenda topic was a presentation by Coco Culhane, founder and executive director of the Veteran Advocacy Project, who discussed the resources available to NYC veterans. Four board members and four others, some of whom are veterans, attended the meeting.

The Veteran Advocacy Project provides free legal services to low-income veterans and their families, with a focus on those living with post-traumatic stress, brain injury, and substance dependency. It aims to assist them with access to housing, health care, and income.

Resources discussed included protections for veterans under the "Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act," also known as the PACT Act, a federal law passed in August 2022, which expanded the VA's healthcare and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances during prior deployments.

Culhane explained that under the law, there is a list of 23 presumptive conditions resulting from things like burn pit or Agent Orange exposure. She said that if a veteran served in a specific location within a specific timeframe, they do **not** have to prove their condition was caused by their military service — that link is presumed for a disability compensation claim.

Agent Orange is a herbicide used by the U.S. Military to control vegetation and was sprayed along with other tactical herbicides, during the Vietnam War. Veterans exposed to Agent Orange include those who served in Vietnam, the Korean Demilitarized Zone, and Thai Air Force bases, and others who flew on or worked on the C-123 aircraft. According to the VA, these deployments caused potential lifelong complications for veterans.

One veteran asked if a civilian doctor could attest that a veteran had been diagnosed with the designated symptoms and Culhane said yes, but that the VA would likely still carry out a compensation and pension (C&P) exam as part of the claim process.

In noting that the PACT Act is a large piece of legislation and contains



Photo by Fahima Degia

(L TO R) BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7) member Tobie Buford, CB7 Veterans committee chair Chad Royer, and CB7 chair of the budget, personnel and ethics committee Jean Hill attend the Bronx CB7 veterans affairs committee meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024.

many types of relief for veterans, Culhane also spoke about the Camp Lejeune Justice Act, which allowed those exposed to contaminated water at the Marine Corps base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to file a claim with the U.S. Department of the Navy.

She said anyone who spent at least 30 days on the base from Aug. 1, 1953, to Dec. 31, 1987, and developed health problems had the opportunity to file a compensation claim within a two-year window that closed in August 2024.

Culhane said that while veterans and their family members can no longer file a lawsuit under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act, disability compensation claims are separate from such lawsuits, and can still be filed with the VA.

Meeting attendees responded to board member Tobie Buford's question about why the benefit was only available for two years and it was clarified that the two-year period was only for lawsuits, not benefits. Still, several veterans expressed frustration, including Jeff Malone, a resident, who said, "They're waiting for all of us to die. They want for all these people to die so that the payout for the claims is less."

When it comes to lawyers' fees charged to veterans for the pursuit of claims, Culhane said there were caps for such fees which had been announced, and that veterans should be careful because some lawyers were charging much more than the announced fee caps.

Congressional Bill S.5130 - The Protect Camp Lejeune Victims Ensnared by Trial-lawyer's Scams Act or the Protect Camp Lejeune VETS Act was introduced to Congress a few years ago but has not yet passed. If passed, it would limit attorney's fees charged on claims involving eligible veterans.

Another topic discussed was discharges from the military. Discharge upgrades are obtained through the U.S. Department of Defense. Culhane said one type of review board has a three-year statute of limitation from the discovery of the discharge error or injustice and said under the law, this can be waived "in the interest of justice."

It was discussed that some lawyers may turn a veteran away if it has been more than three years, as some lawyers may not know the time limit is waivable. Culhane

said any decisions taken on the waiver of the statute of limitations is part of the upgrade application and is not a separate process.

Culhane also said that certain discharge narrative reasons automatically get a discharge review. These may include "less than honorable" discharge narratives which may refer to homosexual activity, homosexual conduct, or a homosexual declaration. She noted that the discharge upgrade application process is distinct from veterans' benefits and involve two separate agencies.

The board and residents agreed that, in general, veterans' benefits were not well advertised, and veterans typically learn more from each other.

After the meeting, committee chair Chad Royer said, "I think on the City level, the City has the greatest opportunity to increase its budgets to help the veterans who live, work, and play here, and the veteran organizations that do business here. Over the course of four to five years, they have not added the necessary increases in their budgets."

Board members later explained that Bronx CB7's budget requests would be discussed at the CB7 general board meeting later in October. After the meeting, Malone had some suggestions for the board's budget requests regarding infrastructure.

"On Grand Concourse, I know there's a couple of bumps. If you catch the 9 bus across the Grand Concourse, it's a little bouncy through there and there's actually a pothole on Grand Concourse; it's the ramp up from Valentine going west-bound," he said.

The board also discussed upcoming events such as the CB7 Veterans' Day Commemoration on Saturday, Nov. 9, at 10 a.m., on Mosholu Parkway between Marion Avenue and Hull Avenue in Bedford Park. A 5-day breathing workshop series is also taking place online from Nov. 6 to Nov. 10 from 6.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., and from Nov. 13 to Nov. 17 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Those interested can contact Project Welcome Home Troops board chair Leslye Moore at [leslye.moore@pwht.org](mailto:leslye.moore@pwht.org).

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance were also hosting a Veterans Day ceremony at Memorial Grove in Van Cortlandt Park on Sunday, Nov. 3, at noon.

\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.



Photo by Fahima Degia

(L TO R) BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7) veterans committee chair Chad Royer, CB7 chair of the budget, personnel and ethics committee Jean Hill, board member Bernard Wright, and Coco Culhane, founder and executive director of the Veteran Advocacy Project, attend the Bronx CB7 veterans affairs committee meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024.

# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers what effect, in their opinion, a second Trump presidency will have on the immigrant community.



"I think the immigrant community will be impacted greatly being that Donald Trump has already stated that he will go forward with mass deportations. However, in the immigrant community, there's a lot of people who came into the country illegally and some who have come in legally, and whoever came in illegally and is doing illegal things should go."

**Christian Brito,**  
Morris Park  
Photo by David Greene



"There's a lot of people flooding the border and coming here by the thousands, and I know this is the land of opportunity and people come here for a better life, but I've been hearing on the news that a lot of immigrants are committing crimes, and those people should go back to where they came from. Immigrants who are poor and come here with their kids, I know it's [expletive-up] that it's illegal to cross the border without proper papers, but if they come and make it, and are just trying to work for a better life, I think they deserve a chance."

**Alban Alamiti,**  
Morris Park  
Photo by David Greene



"Yes, if people don't have a work visa, they will more than likely be deported. I don't know. He knows what he's doing. He will stop this and stop the wars. Well, I don't have an ID, they stole my wallet. I don't know what will happen if ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) sweeps me up. They will have to go and find me on the computer. Yes, people can be deported by accident like me because I don't have an ID, but they have all my documents. He will do the correct thing."

**Salim Rafek,**  
Olinville  
Photo by David Greene



"I think that Donald Trump being president will hamper relations with immigrants because it sounds like he wants to send a lot of people back to their own countries, Muslims, people from Mexico and China in particular. People with work visas can possibly be affected. I have a friend in Dallas who's from Tokyo. I'm not sure if he has a work visa or not but he might be a U.S. citizen at this point. If a citizen didn't have an ID and was deported, that would be awful, and I guess there is a chance that can happen."

**Robert Powell,**  
Norwood  
Photo by David Greene



"It will have no effect on the legal immigrant population. The good people will stay, and we will get rid of the criminals. I don't believe anyone will be deported by mistake; Trump has a list of all the bad people. People should not be fooled by all the talk."

**John Schaffer,**  
Brooklyn resident visiting Indian Village  
Photo by David Greene

*Editor's Note: According to Pew Research Center estimates based on the 2022 American Community Survey, the unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S. grew to 11 million in 2022, the first sustained increase in the unauthorized immigrant population since the period from 2005 to 2007. The increase from 10.5 million in 2021 reversed a long-term downward trend from 2007 to 2019. However, the number of unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. in 2022 was still below the peak of 12.2 million in 2007. For more information, visit <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/27/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>.*

*A National Institute of Justice-funded study found that undocumented immigrants are arrested at less than half the rate of native-born U.S. citizens for violent and drug crimes, and a quarter the rate of native-born citizens for property crimes. For more information, visit <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/undocumented-immigrant-offending-rate-lower-us-born-citizen-rate>*

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# Elections 2024: Republicans Make inroads but The Bronx Remains Blue

By **SÍLE MOLONEY, ARIEL PACHECO, DAVID GREENE & MIRIAM QUIÑONES**

Of the 5.3 million registered voters in New York City on Election Day, 339,383 Bronxites cast their votes based on the latest unofficial results from NYC Board of Elections. Final numbers including mail-in ballots are still being tallied.

Below is an overview of the latest unofficial results. Democratic presidential nominee, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris led with 244,385 votes (73%) in The Bronx to former U.S. President Donald Trump's 91,542 votes (27%). Beating Harris nationally (312 to 226), in declaring victory in the early hours of Nov. 6, Trump pledged to "heal" the country. Harris conceded later on Nov. 6, urging Democrats not to lose hope in politics, and never to "give up the fight for our democracy."

Republicans have since won the U.S. Senate (53 to 47), and the U.S. House of Representatives (218 to 208). Steven Cheung, Trump campaign communications director, said U.S. President Joe Biden called Trump to congratulate him on his victory, and welcomed him to the White House on Nov. 13 to discuss a smooth transition between the current administration and the incoming one. The Trump campaign said Trump very much appreciated the call.

New York Young Republicans also is-



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**VOTERS MILL AROUND** P.S. 86 polling site at 2756 Reservoir Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights on Election Day, Nov. 5, 2024.

sued a statement congratulating Trump as well as Vice President-Elect and Young Republican JD Vance. "Make no mistake, this election was a referendum

on the political establishment," they said in part. "Republicans listened to voters throughout their ranks and put forward a vision for a stronger, safer, wealthier, and greater America."

They added, "Democrats ignored the will of their voters by usurping Joe Biden and coronating Kamala Harris as their nominee for president while doubling down on the hateful and divisive rhetoric they've become so synonymous with. And with that, it's no surprise that Trump has over-performed with almost every demographic including 42% of young voters under 30."

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson gave her reaction to the results on Nov. 6, writing, "The outcome of this 2024 Presidential election represents a stark divide. It's a sobering reminder of the work we need to do to bridge these divides and ensure that our voices are heard. As we move forward, we must remain vigilant and committed to advocating for our residents."

She added in part,

"Regardless of who serves as Commander-in-Chief, we will continue to work with our local, state, and federal partners to protect the rights of our families and ensure that our community's needs are prioritized. In these times of uncertainty, it's vital that we come together, regardless of political affiliation, to safeguard our residents' rights and well-being. Our strength lies in our unity, and we must not allow divisiveness to distract us from the work at hand."

Democratic U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand led the U.S. Senate race with over 71% of the vote over Republican Michael Sapraicone (27%), and LaRouche Party candidate Diane Sare (0.63%). Gillibrand said in part, "This victory makes it absolutely clear that New Yorkers believe in a government that works, and that we must put people over politics. I am committed to finding common sense solutions, which is why I always reach across the aisle to find common ground."

Democratic Congressman Adriano Espaillat led Republican/Conservative Ruben Vargas in NY-13 as a whole (Bronx & Manhattan) with over 83% of the vote. He later declared victory, saying, "Thank you to the constituents of New York's 13th congressional district for your support and trust to represent you, once again, in Washington. It is my honor, and I vow to continue my efforts on your behalf to ensure your voices are heard in Congress."

Democratic Congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez led Republican/Conservative Tina Forte in NY-14 as a whole (Bronx & Queens) with over 68% of the vote. The congresswoman's team declared victory on Tuesday night, and Ocasio-Cortez later said, "Thank you to the people of The Bronx and Queens for re-electing me to another term in Congress. As a waitress, I never thought serving in Congress would ever be a reality. It will always remain the honor of

my life to serve our community."

The congresswoman had spent much of the final weeks before Election Day, across the country campaigning for the Harris-Walz campaign. It is the fourth term in Congress for the congresswoman since she burst onto the national scene, having caused a major upset in the Democratic Primary in 2018.

In response to a social media post by Ryan James Girdusky, who said, "Still waiting on results to come in... but guess who's congressional district had one of the biggest swings towards Trump in the country? Answer: AOC," Republican candidate for NY-14, Tina Forte, wrote, "We have started a movement in the Bronx and Queens. We have more work to do! #SaveNY"

The congresswoman held an Instagram Live session on Nov. 6 to discuss the impact of the election results on Americans. She spoke about "inside-outside politics," meaning that while it was important to have people inside political institutions who work to move the country forward, it was also important to have mass movements of working people outside to also help drive political agendas. "We cannot give up," she said, in part. "We have no choice." She later shared that some voters had voted for both her and President-elect Trump and posted their reasons for doing so.

Democratic Congressman Ritchie Torres led Republican/Conservative Gonzalo Duran (21%) and Jose Vega (2.36%) of the LaRouche Party with 76% of the vote in NY-15. Earlier on Election Day, the congressman had said, "Team Torres has been hard at work campaigning for Vice President Kamala Harris and fighting for a House Democratic majority that will make Hakeem Jeffries the next Speaker of the House."

He added, "I am proud that I can-

*(continued on next page)*



Screenshot courtesy of Aaron from Queens via X

**REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ** shares what some voters said were their reasons they voted for both her and President-Elect Donald Trump.

(continued from previous page)

paigned for Vice President Kamala Harris in swing states among Jewish swing voters in Georgia, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. I am proud that Team Torres raised nearly \$6 million in support of Congressional Democrats. I am proud that Team Torres co-led the Equality PAC, which has raised over \$20 million in support of Congressional Democrats, and which is poised to expand the ranks of LGBTQ representation in Congress to an extent not seen before.”

He continued, “To my fellow Democrats: We all have done our part. The greatest contribution that each of us can make lies in voting. When we vote, we win, and win, we must for the sake of democracy, equality, and reproductive liberty.”

The congressman later said he was honored to be re-elected for a third term. “Thank you to the people of NY-15 in The Bronx for affording me the high honor of representing them in the United States Congress.”

Democratic Westchester County Executive George Latimer, who as reported beat Congressman Jamaal Bowman (NY-16) in the Democratic Primary for that district, led Republican Miriam Levitt in the general election with 88.9% of the vote.

“The people of Westchester and The Bronx have spoken, and I am honored to be your congressman-elect,” Latimer later said to a group of his supporters. “To those who volunteered, knocked doors, phone-banked, joined me at a train, thank you so much. I look forward to fighting relentlessly for every resident of this district,” he added.

Democratic State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) in S.D. 31 garnered over 99% of the vote, unopposed in S.D. 31. Democratic State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) led Republican/Conservative Dion Powell in S.D. 33 with over 74% of the vote.

Democratic State Sen. Nathalia Fernandez (S.D. 34) led Republican Conservative Edwinna Herrera with 68% of the vote in S.D. 34 with over 67% of the vote. Declaring victory, she later wrote, “Thank you SD34! It is an honor to serve you. #TwoMoreYears”

Democratic State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), and Bronx Democratic Party chair, led former Democrat and now Conservative Irene Estrada, with 91% of the vote in S.D. 36. Democratic Assemblyman George Alvarez (A.D. 78) led with 75% based on the unofficial results on Election Night, Nov. 5, after poll closure in A.D. 78.

Democratic Assemblyman John Zacaro Jr. (A.D. 80) led Republican Nicholas Marricco (27%) and Conservative Grace Marrero (5%) with 67% of the vote in A.D. 80. Democratic Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) led Republican/Conservative Kevin Pazmino with 76% of the vote in A.D. 81.

In response to a social media post by Holly Pretsky on Nov. 6, who shared a photo of Torres, writing, “Hello from JFK where weary depressed Democrats are shuffling from gate to gate as Jet-Blue attempts to locate our plane. Somos 2024 begins,” former assemblywoman

for Manhattan A.D. 65, Yuh Line Niou, a progressive Democrat, responded in reference to the photo, saying, “That’s not a Democrat. That’s Ritchie Torres.”

In response, Daniel Rosenthal wrote, “Democratic voters sent him [Torres] to Washington three times and rejected you [Niou].” Dinowitz, a staunch supporter of Torres, retweeted the reply.

Democratic Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (A.D. 82) led Conservative / Republican Juan de la Cruz with 68% of the vote in A.D. 82. Democratic Assembly Majority Speaker Carl Heastie (A.D. 83) led Republican/Conservative Stephanie Liggio with 88% of the vote in A.D. 83.

“After a hard-fought election, it appears that our Assembly Democratic Majority will increase to 103 members!” Heastie later said. “Thank you to the voters who came out and made your voices heard. We have so much work to do – I look forward to working with all my majority colleagues in the coming year.”

Democratic Assemblywoman Yudelka Tapia (A.D. 86) led Republican Woodrow Hines Jr. (22%) and Conservative Darney Rivers (2.5%) with 74% of the vote in A.D. 86.

The nonprofit, Bronxworks, later tweeted, “Congratulations to Bronx Assembly Members @Dais77NY, @mikebenedetto82, @JeffreyDinowitz, @KariesReyes87, @AmandaSextimo, @ChantelJ79, @YudelkaTapia, @GALVAREZNYC, @KennyBurgosNY, and @CarlHeastie on your re-election! Proud to work with great leaders in service to our community.”

Democratic Assemblywoman Karines Reyes (A.D. 87) garnered 99% of the vote in A.D. 87. Reyes, as reported, was one of many Hispanic leaders to denounce the disparaging remarks made about Puerto Rico by a Trump surrogate at a Trump rally in Madison Square Garden on Sunday, Oct. 27.

Democrat Matthew Parker-Raso received 99% of the votes in the race for Judge in the Supreme Court – 12th District.

Democrat Eliezer Rodriguez led with 18% of the vote in the race for Judge of Civil Court – Bronx County, followed by Democrats, Deidra Moore (17%), Dawn Guglielmo (15%), Scott Krompinger (15%), Angel Cruz (17%), Diomarys Escano-Bell (14%).

Democrat Brenda L. Rivera garnered 99% of the vote unopposed in the race for Judge for Civil Court – Municipal Court District 2.

Unofficial results for Proposition 1, a proposal to change the New York State Constitution after the NY State legislature passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in two consecutive legislative sessions, yielded a 77% Yes vote. Propositions 2-6 related to various changes to the City Charter. Unofficial results for Proposition 2, to amend the City Charter to expand and clarify the Department of Sanitation’s power to clean streets and other City property and require disposal of waste in containers, yielded a 61% Yes vote.

Unofficial results for Proposition 3, to amend the City Charter to require

# NEWS BRIEFS

By SILE MOLONEY

## Salute to Veterans

Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) joined representatives of Montefiore Health System on Nov. 12 for a “Salute to Service” event in honor of Veterans Day. Dinowitz joined Montefiore’s President & CEO Dr. Philip Ozuah and other staff members to honor those who have served the country and military.

Several U.S. flags were spotted on display on various residential buildings in Bronx Community District 7 in the lead up to Veterans Day. In 2023, City Council Member Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson sponsored a city council resolution which passed and designates the month of November as Veteran Appreciation Month in New York City.



Photo courtesy of the Office of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER JEFFREY** Dinowitz (A.D. 81) joins Montefiore’s President & CEO Dr. Philip Ozuah and staff at Montefiore Health System on Nov. 12, 2024, for a “Salute to Service” event in honor of Veterans Day.



Photo by Sile Moloney

**GIORGIO’S PIZZERIA HAS** opened 3167 Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood.

## Giorgio’s Pizzeria Opens on Bainbridge Avenue

Giorgio’s Pizzeria has opened in Norwood where Sal’s Pizzeria used to operate for over 40 years at 3167 Bainbridge Avenue. The newly refurbished restaurant is owned by George, brother of Nicky, owner of Nicky’s Coffee Shop, located across the street at 3140 Bainbridge Avenue. Business is going well according to one employee we spoke to Nov. 8. Dine in, take out, and deliveries are all offered.



## New Store Opening on East 207th and Bainbridge Ave

A new grocery store is opening soon on the corner of East 207<sup>th</sup> Street and Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood. Ali Akram, the new store proprietor, told *Norwood News* on Nov. 8 the former store owner closed the former store, which sold various smoke-related paraphernalia and electronic accessories, of his own volition. *Norwood News* has contacted the Sheriff’s office for comment.

According to the Sheriff’s office, landlords who rent space to businesses that sell unlicensed tobacco or cannabis products may face legal consequences, including fines and penalties. Those found in violation can pay up to \$1,000/day.

Meanwhile, a judge ruled on Oct. 29 that a recently enacted local padlock law doesn’t provide sufficient due process to Smoke Shop store owners. In May, Operation Padlock to Protect allowed sheriffs to order the closure of certain stores for unlicensed cannabis sales. In September, NY1 reported that the City’s Department of Investigation has opened a probe into how cash seized during smoke shop raids is being handled by the Sheriff’s Office.

## DiVA Talk Held at Monroe College

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson joined community members, and advocates who work to prevent domestic violence at Monroe College on Nov. 12 for a DiVA Talk entitled, “What’s Next?” Various attendees, including Melissa Cebollero, associate VP for community affairs at Montefiore, united for change and action, and were honored with awards for their work in addressing domestic violence, its aftermath and prevention. Discussions were also held on domestic violence causes and prevention, advocacy, poverty, and politics.



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Bronx Borough President

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Vanessa Gibson joins attendees for a DiVA Talk held at Monroe College, 2505 Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024.

(continued on page 8)

# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY ARIEL PACHECO



## Free Housing and Immigration Services

State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) is hosting free housing and immigration services in collaboration with the nonprofit, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC), on Friday, Nov. 22, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 2432 Grand Concourse, Suite 506 Bronx, NY 10458. Appointments are required. For more information, call (718) 933-2034.

## Violence Prevention Resource Fair

The Office of Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson is hosting a violence prevention resource fair on Monday, Nov. 18, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on 116 Sheridan Avenue Bronx, NY, 10456. For more information, call Millicent Matos at (718) 590-3513.

## Bronx Dance Fund

The Bronx Dance Fund application cycle is now open, offering up to \$7,500 to individual Bronx-based dancers, choreographers, and dance organiza-

tions. The deadline to apply is Monday, Nov. 25, at 11.59 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.bronxarts.org/grants/bronx-dance-fund>.

## Free Leaf Bag

Grab a free leaf bag from Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) while supplies last Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 229-A East 204th Street, Bronx, NY 10458. NYC Department of Sanitation collects leaves on Sunday, Nov. 25. For more information, contact Steven Ochoa Camacho at (929) 496-7687 or [sochoa-camacho@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:sochoa-camacho@cb.nyc.gov).

## We Are the Bronx Fellowship Against Hate

Apply to the We Are the Bronx Fellowship for professional development, relationship building, cross-cultural dialogue, and skill building to discuss the rise of hate in communities. Applications are due by Friday, Nov. 29. For more information, email Scott Kalmikoff at [skalmikoff@riverdaley.org](mailto:skalmikoff@riverdaley.org).

## Literacy in Community Online Programs

Give your child a strong start with a host of free programs including family workshops, family academies, and read-aloud with LINC NYC. For more information, email Mariah Aviles at [maviles@lincnyc.org](mailto:maviles@lincnyc.org).

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has open affordable housing lotteries for housing units in The Bronx at the following locations, among others:

- 3178 Villa Avenue, with a deadline of Nov. 21.
- 114 East 198, with a deadline of Dec. 10.
- 3178 Villa Avenue in Bedford Park, with a deadline of Nov. 21.
- 2880 Jerome Avenue, with a deadline of Dec. 30.
- 2077 Ryer Avenue, with a deadline of Dec. 19.

Visit <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/search-lotteries> for

more information.

## Help Decide How to Spend “The People’s Money”

NYC Civic Engagement Commission is encouraging New Yorkers to participate in the 3rd Annual “People’s Money” initiative, the City’s citywide participatory budgeting process. The People’s Money uses mayoral expense funding for ideas to fund projects to benefit New York City communities. Projects must be implemented within one year and must be expense funding.

Residents can submit ideas for local projects to address community needs. All New Yorkers aged 11 and older, regardless of immigration status, can decide how to spend part of the City budget. The window for submission of ideas began on Oct. 10 and ends on Nov. 22. Ideas can be submitted at an in-person idea generation session near you, or online at <https://www.participate.nyc.gov/processes/Citywidepb2024/f/343/>. To find and attend a local idea generation session near you, visit [participate.nyc.gov](http://participate.nyc.gov).

# Elections 2024: Republicans Make inroads but The Bronx Remains Blue

(continued from page 7)

fiscal analysis from the Council before hearings and votes on laws, authorize fiscal analysis from the mayor, and update budget deadlines, yielded a 55% Yes vote.

Unofficial results for Proposition 4 to require additional public notice and time before the City Council votes on laws, respecting the public safety operations of the police, correction, or fire departments, yielded a 56% Yes vote.

Unofficial results for Proposition 5 to amend the City Charter to require more detail in the annual assessment of City facilities, mandate that facility needs inform capital planning, and update capital planning deadlines, yielded a 57% Yes vote.

Unofficial results for Proposition 6 to amend the City Charter to establish the Chief Business Diversity Officer (CBDO), and authorize the Mayor to designate the office that issues film permits, and combine archive boards, yielded a 52% No vote.

The Norwood polling site at P.S. 94 Kings College, located at 3530 Kings College Place, saw voters filing in and out throughout the day. One voter who declined to be named but who has lived in Norwood his entire life told the Norwood News the voting process had been seamless. Reports began to come in later on Election Day of problems with machines at some Queens polling sites.

“Everything was easy and simple,” the voter said. “I didn’t have to wait long and didn’t have any issues with anything.” The voter said he voted for Kamala Harris for president. “I have daughters, so abortion was a big issue for me



Photo by David Greene

**OUR LADY OF** Grace Church polling site on Bronxwood Avenue and East 226th Street in the Wakefield section of The Bronx saw voters mill in and out on Election Day, Nov. 5, 2024.

this cycle. I think she’ll do the best she can to protect that right.”

As for the other races on the ballot, the voter added, “I supported the Democratic Party.” Over at the P.S. 56 Norwood Heights polling site, located at 341 East 207th Street, also in Norwood, Nathalie, a first-time voter, said while voting was new to her, it was a smooth process. “I voted for Harris,” Nathalie said. “It was my first time voting so I was a little nervous, but there were no issues. I was in and out and I really do encourage everyone to go out and vote,” she added.

Norwood resident AJ Ramos later told *Norwood News* that at poll site M.S. 80, located at 149 East Mosholu Parkway

North, a female poll worker dressed in an orange jacket who didn’t give her name, had allegedly been telling voters they had to vote for the party they were registered with, even though voters could change their vote on the day.

It was also not possible to register in advance for The Working Families Party, LaRouche Party, or for write-ins. Ramos alleges that once corrected on the matter, the worker then seemingly went around and told “a few” people that a change was indeed an option. *Norwood News* reached out to the BOE for a comment. We did not receive a response.

At P.S. 86 polling site at 2756 Reservoir Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, a lot of people were lined up to get inside to vote on Election Day. While some said they were voting for Harris, others wanted “the best person” to win who would “fix” everything. Speaking in Spanish, one voter, Mr. Vera, said he voted for Harris because she is the one who will change everything for the best.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**VOTERS VOTE AT** P.S. 86 polling site at 2756 Reservoir Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights on Election Day, Nov. 5, 2024.



# DEA Raids Decatur Avenue Home after Years of Complaints

By DAVID GREENE

After years of complaints about a Norwood home allegedly taken over by a local gang, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was joined by members of the NYPD in executing a search warrant and raid of the dilapidated building located at 3267 Decatur Avenue at 6 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 4.

The NYPD initially directed inquiries into the incident to the DEA on Nov. 4, but after several follow-up emails and calls amid no response, on Nov. 12, the NYPD confirmed the incident, telling *Norwood News*, “A search warrant was executed at the aforementioned location. Alleged narcotics were found. There were no persons present at the time of the search.”

One resident of the block told *Norwood News* how the raid unfolded, saying, “I woke up to the ATF officers in my backyard looking for the squatters who fled the house with a firearm.” Although the claim could not be confirmed, Citizens App video did show members of law enforcement searching the rear yard.

A visit to the home on Friday, Nov. 8, found the front of the home had several broken windows. The garage door was open, and piles of plastic bags and car tires were stacked three-feet high. A large tarp was erected over the driveway and a scooter was chained to the front gate of the neighboring home. Two surveillance cameras hung over the front door that was slightly ajar.

Asked about the home and the police raid, one next door neighbor said, “Talking to you can get me in trouble. I don’t want to get involved.”

On Saturday, Nov. 9, Norwood contacted a man who had previously lived in the two-story home. He declined to be identified for fear of his safety and alleged the building was left to him in 2020 by a former female owner, Mary McCaffrey, when she died.



Photo by David Greene

**THE FRONT DOOR** to a home at 3267 Decatur Avenue in Norwood is seen ajar on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024, after a police raid took place on Nov. 4, 2024.

He also alleged he was the legal owner of the home around 2020/2021 when he allowed a pregnant woman and her boyfriend to stay in it rent-free. We have the man for legal evidence of his claims and will share any updates we receive. The man also alleged a local gang took over the home after that.

He recalled, “I left like a year ago,” [while the gang were still there according to him]. “A bunch of Bloods were hurting me,” he said. “I had to leave out of there because they were hurting me, you know, selling drugs and all that.”

The man continued, “They were trying to [expletive] kill me and all that, so I had to get out of there, and I left them [the gang] in there because they came in and took over the place, and then they were kicking me out and hurting me.”

He then claimed he had filed several



Photo by David Greene

**BROKEN WINDOWS AND** debris litter the driveway, on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024, of a home at 3267 Decatur Avenue in Norwood, where a prior resident alleges a local gang were squatting.

police reports, stating, “I was reporting them and all that, but nobody, the police never did anything.” *Norwood News* asked for evidence of the report numbers to follow up. We will share any updates we receive.

The man added, “They [police] should have raided the house a long time ago because I was trying to let the cops know what was going on, and they told me they can’t do anything,” because of “squatters rights’ laws.”

Two residents of the block confirmed that a gang had indeed moved into the building. One male resident also produced at least one 311 complaint report from June 2022 about alleged illegal use of the building for business purposes by the gang, as well as letters to at least one elected official, Assemblyman George Alvarez (A.D. 78). The male resident who did not wish to be named either who contacted the elected officials showed *Norwood News* an autoreply he received from the office of the assemblyman, advising that they were working their way through several community requests and would get back to him.

*Norwood News* has contacted the assemblyman’s office for comment. We returned to the home again on Sunday, Nov. 10, and found a new lock installed on the front door and a woman living on the top floor. When asked, the woman, who said she was not in the home at the time of the raid, explained that she had answered an ad for the apartment at that address.

We are following up with her to ask who placed the ad and will share any updates we receive. In reference to the drama surrounding the building and popping her head out from behind a curtain, the woman said, “This is not what I expected; I have to get out of here.”

*Norwood News* asked both the NYPD and the DEA about the former resident’s claims that he filed police reports regarding being assaulted by the gang at the home, as well as the gang’s alleged illegal activity in the building. Both agencies were also asked if they had secured the front door of the home after the Nov. 4 raid. Neither agency immediately responded to our request.

The home in question is located half a block away from P.S. 56 on East 207th Street in Norwood. *Norwood News* will continue to monitor the situation at the home and will update this story accordingly.

When contacted, a DOB official said the agency had not been involved in the enforcement operation and the property had no open OATH/ECB violations issued by DOB. ECB stands for the Environmental Control Board.

The Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is an administrative tribunal that provides hearings on notices of violation issued by City agencies.

According to City records, the owner of the property is Mary McCaffrey.

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Photo by David Greene

**PLASTIC BAGS, CAR** tires and other debris is seen strewn across the front driveway and garage at 3267 Decatur Avenue in Norwood on Friday, Nov. 8, 2024.

# CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY, DAVID GREENE



## Bedford Park Car Break-Ins

A resident of Bedford Park complained that there have been several car break-ins taking place on East 205<sup>th</sup> Street between Jerome Avenue and Paul Avenue, and shared some video footage with *Norwood News* of broken glass on the block as apparent evidence of the break-ins. *Norwood News* paid a visit to the area in the early hours of Tuesday, Nov. 12, and did not see any damaged cars or anyone hanging around the area, though it is poorly lit, there are dozens of cars to choose from, and the nearest building (Scott Towers) is quite a distance away.

We followed up with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct on the matter who confirmed there were indeed some reported car break-ins in the area, and that it was very quiet there during the night. “Our units do patrol that area during the overnight hours mainly to prevent car break ins,” they said. “Hopefully, people report the break ins, so we know when there is a spike in a certain area.” *Norwood News* did witness a patrol car on the block when we visited.



Photo by Síle Moloney

**THE BLOCK ALONG** East 205<sup>th</sup> Street between Jerome Avenue and Paul Avenue in Bedford Park, seen here in the early hours of Nov. 12, 2024, has seen some car break-ins, according to residents and the NYPD.

## Fordham Manor: Man Shot in Devoe Park

A 56-year-old man is stable in hospital after he was shot in Fordham Manor, police said. NYPD Community Affairs Officer Stephen Echevarria from the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct said the shooting took place on Thursday Oct. 31, at 12.35 a.m. He said the 911 call directed police to Devoe Park where officers found the victim shot once in the thigh.

He said the victim was taken to St. Barnabas Hospi-

tal, and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct detective squad are investigating the incident which is believed to be domestic in nature. At the Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) board meeting on Oct. 22, Echevarria said the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct was up on crime, citing two murders, five rapes, 41 robberies, 55 felony assaults, 18 burglaries, 76 major theft of personal property, and 22 vehicle thefts.

## Fordham Heights: Man Sought for Groping Incident

The NYPD is asking for the public’s help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo at right who they say is wanted in connection with a groping incident that occurred in Fordham Heights. Police said that on Tuesday, Sept. 24, at around 1.10 a.m., a 26-year-old female victim was at the intersection of East Burnside Avenue and Walton Avenue when an unidentified individual approached her and touched her breast.

They said the person then fled the location on foot, traveling westbound on East Burnside Avenue. No physical injuries were reported. The person

sought is described as male, has a dark complexion and a medium build, and is around 5 feet, 7 inches tall.



## Fordham Manor: Man Walks into Subway with Loaded Machine Gun

Two men were arrested after one walked into Kingsbridge Road subway station serving the B/D lines in Fordham Manor on Tuesday, Nov. 5, [Election Day] armed with a machine gun, police said. They said the incident unfolded at around 4.30 p.m., when officers observed a 20-year-old male

trespassing inside an unauthorized area of the station to publicly urinate. They said officers approached the man on the northbound platform and repeatedly requested his identification which they said the man refused to provide.

They said when officers then attempted to place the man under arrest, he resisted by stiffening his arms and refusing to be handcuffed. “During a brief struggle, a loaded and defaced Palmetto State Armory PA-15 firearm fell out of the male’s backpack,” police said. “Two officers sustained non-life-threatening injuries during the struggle and were transported to area hospitals,” they added. Police said a 20-year-old male suspect, Abraham Sosa, from Van Nest, was taken into custody and hit with various charges, including criminal possession of a machine gun, criminal trespass, and assault on a police officer.

They said that during the arrest, a second 21-year-old man attempted to interfere with officers while they were attempting to take Sosa into custody. They said he kicked an officer’s  
*(continued on page 13)*

CompStat Book		Week of 11/04/24 - 11/10/24					
		28 Day			Year to Date		
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	0.0 %	1	0	- %	25	12	108.3 %
Rape	0.0 %	3	3	0.0 %	31	19	63.2 %
Robbery	80.0 %	31	35	-11.4 %	341	307	11.1 %
Felony Assault	0.0 %	74	48	54.2 %	769	694	10.8 %
Burglary	0.0 %	14	12	16.7 %	184	146	26.0 %
Grand Larceny	100.0 %	57	41	39.0 %	590	483	22.2 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-20.0 %	14	19	-26.3 %	187	245	-23.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.1 %</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>22.8 %</b>	<b>2,127</b>	<b>1,906</b>	<b>11.6 %</b>
Patrol	38.5 %	192	152	26.3 %	2,083	1,854	12.4 %
Transit	0.0 %	2	5	-60.0 %	20	28	-28.6 %
Housing	-100.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	24	24	0.0 %
Shooting Victims	0.0 %	3	1	200.0 %	59	52	13.5 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	3	1	200.0 %	46	41	12.2 %
UCR Rape*	0.0 %	4	4	0.0 %	45	50	-10.0 %
Other Sex Crimes	-100.0 %	0	9	-33.3 %	84	79	6.3 %
Petit Larceny	141.7 %	90	74	21.6 %	646	508	-6.8 %
Misd. Assault	333.3 %	98	65	50.8 %	1,000	1,057	-5.4 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	0	2	-100.0 %	0	3	-100.0 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	3	4	-25.0 %

- All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17.  
- Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSP/L) definitions.  
\* Unattended Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape

Source: NYPD

**MAJOR CRIME STATISTICS** for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for the 28-day period ending Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (left), and year-to-date major crime statistics for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct as of Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (right).

CompStat Book		Week of 11/04/24 - 11/10/24					
		28 Day			Year to Date		
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	1	5	-80.0 %
Rape	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	11	8	37.5 %
Robbery	0.0 %	6	12	-50.0 %	122	135	-8.6 %
Felony Assault	75.0 %	26	14	85.7 %	219	179	22.3 %
Burglary	200.0 %	13	11	18.2 %	145	126	15.1 %
Grand Larceny	-52.6 %	40	64	-37.5 %	643	594	8.2 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-41.7 %	33	32	3.1 %	296	305	-3.0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>-25.0 %</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>-11.3 %</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>1,352</b>	<b>6.3 %</b>
Patrol	-21.6 %	110	124	-11.3 %	1,374	1,270	8.2 %
Transit	-100.0 %	1	2	-50.0 %	5	10	-50.0 %
Housing	-50.0 %	7	7	0.0 %	58	72	-19.4 %
Shooting Victims	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	3	6	-50.0 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	3	6	-50.0 %
UCR Rape*	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	19	22	-13.6 %
Other Sex Crimes	0.0 %	5	5	0.0 %	44	32	37.5 %
Petit Larceny	36.8 %	98	122	-19.7 %	970	994	-2.4 %
Misd. Assault	20.0 %	43	21	104.8 %	318	269	18.2 %
Hate Crimes	-100.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	2	3	-33.3 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	1	2	-50.0 %

- All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17.  
- Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSP/L) definitions.  
\* Unattended Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape

Source: NYPD

**MAJOR CRIME STATISTICS** for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for the 28-day period ending Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (left), and year-to-date major crime statistics for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct as of Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (right).



## Letters To The Editor

*Editor's Note: We reserve the right to edit letters for space, clarity, civility and accuracy.*

### Re: Norwood News article entitled "Family of Angellyh Yambo Sues Gun Manufacturer Polymer80, Inc. for Wrongful Death"

I strongly support Senate Bill S4927. This Senate bill, which will create a civil cause of action for the sale, production, or transport of assault weapons or ghost guns within New York State, will greatly help people file civil cause of action lawsuits against companies that manufacture ghost guns.

Sponsored by State Sen. Luis R. Sepúlveda, Senate Bill S4927 will give a person the ability to obtain a legal remedy of at least \$10,000 for each violation of the law, as well as reimbursement for their lawyer's fees from the guilty party. If Bill S4927 is signed into law, not only will the estate of Angellyh Yambo be able to bring a lawsuit against Polymer80 for manufacturing the ghost gun that killed her, but

the estate will also be able to sue the individual that killed her, under the Bill's section 1361, subsection 1.

The subsection details that if anyone transports assault weapons or ghost guns into New York State, they can be held civilly liable by the injured party. I hope that this vital bill becomes law and leads to a sharp reduction in the number of assault weapons and ghost guns available within New York State.

### Nella Valentino-Simmons Williamsbridge

*Editor's Note: Everytown gun violence awareness advocates announced on Aug. 30 that Polymer80, the largest producer of ghost gun kits and parts in the country, has shut down. Ghost guns are guns ordered online and assembled at home. The group said the announcement followed multiple lawsuits brought against Polymer80 by Everytown Law, adding that Polymer80's non-serialized, untraceable ghost guns, bought and built without background checks, have been fueling the gun violence crisis for years.*

*On Nov. 13, The Angellyh Yambo Foundation confirmed that its lawsuit against*

*Polymer80 is still pending, that its lawsuit is separate from the Everytown Law lawsuit, and that Polymer80 is back in operation and runs two websites that appear to be accepting orders.*

### A Compassionate Thanksgiving

Later this month, President Biden will "pardon" two turkeys at the White House, a symbolic gesture of "mercy." Yet, every year in the U.S., over 224 million turkeys endure a far grimmer fate. These gentle birds are raised in overcrowded sheds thick with toxic fumes, their beaks and toes clipped to prevent stress-related aggression.

At just 16 weeks, they are slaughtered - throats slit, bodies dumped into boiling water for feather removal. Meanwhile, their meat, laden with cholesterol and saturated fat, poses health risks to consumers.

But there's promising news: U.S. turkey production has declined significantly as more Americans embrace plant-based options. This Thanksgiving, let's celebrate our good fortune with a cruelty-free meal - plant-based roasts, seasonal vegetables, fruits, and grains. An internet search for "Vegan Thanksgiving" offers countless delicious, compassionate recipes.

reminds me of "The Outer Limits," a 1960s television show. With the end of around-the-clock commercials by politicians, political parties, political action groups, and pay-for-play special interest groups, we now return control of your television back to you until the next election cycle. No more "Robo" calls, text messages, candidates' campaign mailings clogging mailboxes and weighing down our hardworking postal employees. Finally, some peace and quiet!

Candidates who claimed they cared about the environment can now do their part. Winners and losers should have their paid campaign staff and volunteers pick up all the thousands of campaign signs that litter our roads and highways to help clean up this waste. They could also use leftover campaign funds to hire homeless or unemployed people to collect this litter. Let some people sentenced by judges to perform community service be assigned this task. If candidates refuse to clean up after themselves, the NYC Department of Transportation, Highway or Sanitation should do the job and send candidates the bill.

### Larry Penner Great Neck

*Please send all letters to the editor, along with supporting hyperlinked sources, to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org) or by mail to Norwood News, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, by the Friday before each publication day. Letter writers should aim to write no more than 300 words on local issues or in response to published articles.*

### Niles Neusbaum Williamsbridge

*Editor's Note: The definition of "pardon" as a verb is to forgive or excuse a person, error, or offense. A turkey's "offense," it would seem, is to exist.*

### Election Day Follow-Up

Election Day has come and gone. It

*makes you feel like a failure.*

*After a long school day, you're overwhelmed and just want to escape by gaming. In games, you talk to friends, blow off steam, and it's also one of the only things you feel good at. As you unwind, your parents get upset with you for "wasting your time gaming," you feel so frustrated and misunderstood that you yell right back.*

During the pre-teen and teen years, according to research by the University of California, our brains are especially sensitive to intense emotions, and we haven't fully developed our ability to "hit the brakes" and consider the long-term consequences.

Teens, just like adults, struggle to communicate their feelings when they are overwhelmed. Emotions like shame, anxiety, or low self-esteem can make us feel vulnerable, and instead they come out as anger or shutting down. Parents may feel pushed away by teens in the moments when they need the most support and reassurance.

In these moments, meeting teens with a curious and caring attitude can help them make sense of their emotions, new experiences, and their developing sense of themselves.

If your teen struggles or refuses to go to school, expresses feelings of hopelessness, or causes injury to themselves, they might need mental health support. Teens who are struggling to maintain their relationships with people they care for, or who often make risky or impulsive choices, could also benefit from help. If you're interested in learning more, please contact us at [Wakefield-Adolescent-IOP@montefiore.org](mailto:Wakefield-Adolescent-IOP@montefiore.org).

*Olivia Derella, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist with Montefiore Medical Center's Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), serving youth aged 12-17 years old. The program offers after-school group therapy three days per week, individual therapy, and medication management for teens. A lunchtime virtual parenting group is available for caregivers.*



# Do You Mind? How to Think Like a Teen

By OLIVIA DERELLA

While I work with teens, parents often come to me with questions like: What is my kid watching on their phone all day? Why do they ask for independence but avoid responsibilities? When I try to give advice, why do they get angry with me?

Why do teenagers seem to be struggling more now than ever before?

A study by the American Psychological Association has found intensifying emotional challenges among U.S. adolescents. Teens often express stress around community violence, the state of the world, self-comparison on social media, and the pressure to figure out their futures.

Also, this generation of teens spent critical childhood years socially distancing, trying to learn math as well as social skills from behind a screen. After COVID-19, these kids grew into teens who may still feel uncomfortable at school and connecting with peers.

Here's an exercise to help you enter the mind of a teen. *Imagine you're a 15-year-old named Alex, and trying to keep up with school, but it can be hard to focus. Sometimes you miss important parts of class, but it feels too embarrassing to tell the teacher. Academics are so important to your parents; each test and report card*

The New York City Department of Transportation, Executive and Admin Division cordially invites your company to submit Proposals for the following contract:

**PIN:84125P0002**

**Event Planning Contract(Specifications) available for download free of charge starting 10/23/24.**

To access the RFP, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/mocs/passport/about-passport.page>

Click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort" blue box. Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system. To quickly locate the RFP, insert the EPIN, 84125P0002 into the Keyword search field. In order to respond to the RFP, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

**A pre-bid conference via Zoom is scheduled for 10/30/24 11:30am.**

Those who wish to attend the pre-bid meeting must email the authorized agency contact for a link no later than **10/29/2024 by 4pm.**

The deadline for the submission of questions via email is **11/6/24 by 4:00 pm** to the authorized agency contact person.

This procurement is subject to participation goals for MWBE Goals of 30%.

Any inquiries concerning this IFB should be directed by email, under the subject line "84125P0002/84124MBAD654-Event Planning Contract" to the email address of the Authorized Agency Contact, Kathy Cornwall-Wilson, at [kcornwallwilson@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:kcornwallwilson@dot.nyc.gov) or through the PASSPort communication function.

Responses to this RFP must be submitted via PASSPort.

All Bids must be received via Passport before the Bid Due Date, **11/22/24, no later than 11:00 AM.**



Photo by Síle Moloney

**FIRE UNITS ARE** seen inside Van Cortlandt Park after a brush fire broke out on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024.

## More Brush Fires in VCP as Mayor Bans Grilling in Public Parks

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Following several brush fires which broke out across the City, including in the Highbridge section of the Bronx on Friday, Nov. 8, as well as wildfires in New Jersey, New York City Mayor Eric Adams took additional measures on Saturday, Nov. 9, to mitigate an increased fire risk amid a historic streak of dry weather in the City and in the counties upstate that host New York City’s water reservoirs.

Effective Nov. 9, the mayor said grilling / barbecues would be banned in City parks while the City remained under drought watch, and smoking and other sources of open flame remain illegal throughout the parks system.

“As New York City’s historic streak of dry weather creates new safety risks, today, we are taking additional measures to keep New Yorkers safe,” said Adams. “Effective immediately, we are prohibiting grilling in our parks, and we need all New Yorkers to take commonsense steps to prevent brush fires. Getting through this drought will take all of us working together, and every drop counts, so let’s keep doing our part to save as much water as we can.”

The mayor also issued additional reminders to New Yorkers of key steps to help prevent fires amidst dry conditions:

- Fireworks remain illegal across New York City.
- Take extra safety precautions when welding or undertaking other hot construction activities, particularly when near dry grass or leaves.
- Smoking remains illegal on construction sites across the five boroughs.
- Tapping streetlights for electricity

(for things like holiday decorations) remains illegal, as it poses a large fire risk.

- As fallen and bundled leaves can be a fire accelerant, New Yorkers should continue to set out yard waste on their recycling day for New York City Department of Sanitation pickup and call 311 to have the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) clear clogged catch basins.
- New Yorkers should remove litter and any excessive brush or leaves from sidewalks abutting their homes and businesses.

New Yorkers sensitive to changes in air quality should continue to take appropriate precautions and check [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov) for information on city air quality.

All New Yorkers should subscribe to [Notify.nyc.gov](https://notify.nyc.gov) for up-to-date infor-



Photo courtesy of Yancy

**A BRUSH FIRE** is seen in Van Cortlandt Park in November 2024.

## Out & About

Compiled by **ARIEL PACHECO**

### EVENTS

The Office of Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson is hosting a **Toy Giveaway** on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10460. The giveaway is only open to service members, veterans, and their families with proper credentials. Each child will receive one toy. For more information, call (929) 286-0160.

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), located at 2900 Southern Blvd, Bronx, NY 10458, presents its annual **Holiday Train Show**, beginning Saturday, Nov. 16, through Monday, Jan. 20. Enter a Winter Wonderland like no other as model locomotives and trolleys flow through the Haupt Conservatory. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show-2024/>.

Visit St. James Recreation Center, located 2530 Jerome Ave, Bronx, NY 10468, for **Senior Games** on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Participate in billiards, chess, bingo, dominos, and more. Elsa Maldonado will be the instructor. For more information, call (646) 447-2642.

### KIDS

The Kingsbridge Public Library is hosting a **Chess Club for Kids** on Friday, Nov. 15, at 11 a.m. at 291 W 231st Street, Bronx, NY 10463. This club is aimed at kids aged 5 through 12 and is open to beginners as well as experienced players. For more information, call (718) 548-5656.

### MUSIC

Visit the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, for **La Gran Gala** on Saturday, Nov. 16, at 8 p.m.,

starring Pavel, Maridalia Hernández, Milly Quezada, Lee Burgos, Mari Solis, and Obrien Luna. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

### ARTS

Join the Bronx River Alliance for **Chaos Theory: The Spectrum of Black Abstraction** from Friday, Nov. 15, through Saturday, Dec. 7, at 1087 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10460. This is a group exhibition of new and recent works by a group of Black artists interpreting the theme of Black abstraction through sculpture, assemblage, photography, printmaking, and painting. For more information, call (718) 589-5819.

Visit the Museum of Bronx History at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10467 to view **Historias: The Stories Behind the Images**, an interactive multimedia exhibition on Saturdays, Nov. 16 and Nov. 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The exhibition explores early documentary photographs of The Bronx. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

### LITERATURE

One Book One Bronx will **host a Book Talk** on “Killing the Black Body” by Dorothy Roberts on Tuesday, Nov. 20, on Zoom. It is open to the public. To register, visit <https://onebookonebronx.com/>.

The Norwood Community Library is giving out **Free Books** on Sunday, Nov. 17, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 169 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, 10467. All are welcome. For more information, follow @norwoodcommunitylibrary on Instagram.

### MOVEMENT

Visit the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx for **Leap to the Beat!** on Sunday, Nov. 24, from 10 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. This dance fitness class will raise your heartbeat and spirits, and is available to all levels. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

mation.

On Saturday, the FDNY responded to a call at 3.22 p.m. regarding another brush fire in Van Cortlandt Park near the stables on Broadway and West 254th Street over an area of around 5 acres of brush. They said 12 units, comprising 60 fire personnel responded and the fire was brought under control at 4.56 p.m. No injuries were reported.

One fire official said it was mainly leaves which had burned and no trees caught any major fire. Another said as the forecasted strong wind gusts had, by Saturday afternoon, started to subside, it had made the spread of the fire slightly easier to control.

A gas station is located a relatively short distance away inside the park from where the fire broke out. On Monday, Stephanie Ehrlich, execu-

tive director of Van Cortlandt Park Alliance, said in part, “Van Cortlandt Park’s devoted team of NYC Parks workers, VCPA staff, and vital volunteers have worked together tirelessly identifying new fires that continue to pop up, alerting FDNY and NYPD, and in some cases – assisting with putting the fires out. They are true heroes.”

She thanked the FDNY and NYPD who she said responded quickly to contain each flare up and NYC Parks Enforcement Patrol and Rangers who patrolled the park at all hours. “Thanks to those of you who have been vigilant and alerted us to fire conditions in the field.

We very much appreciate your help and hope that we can count on you in the months ahead.”

Ehrlich said caring for the wood-

(continued on page 13)

# CRIME FILE - CONTINUED

BY SÍLE MOLONEY, DAVID GREENE



(continued from page 10)

body worn camera, was taken into custody, and was later found to be in possession of an officer's cellphone. They said that second man, Christopher Mayren, 21, from Morris Park, was arrested and hit with various charges, including obstructing governmental administration, criminal mischief, criminal possession of stolen property, petit larceny, and harassment. The two men are deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a



court of law.

### Norwood: Shooting on Hull Avenue

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying two people seen in the accompanying photos above who they say are wanted in connection with a shooting in Norwood on Election Day. Police said that on Tuesday, Nov. 5, at

around noon, two unidentified males fired shots in front of 3348 Hull Avenue, close to East Gun Hill Road. They said this caused damage to the rear passenger-side window of a parked and unoccupied 2010 Blue Mazda.

They said the gunmen fled the location on foot to parts unknown, that there were no injuries reported, and the approximate value of the damaged vehicle was \$300. Police said the two people sought are described as male, have dark complexions, slim builds, and were estimated to be between 18 to 20 years of age. They said the first suspect was seen wearing a black hoodie sweatshirt, gray pants, and brown boots, and was later seen wearing a green hoodie sweatshirt after the incident. They said the second suspect was seen wearing all black clothing and a black face mask.

### Bedford Park: ATV Rider Sought for Assault on Female Police Officer

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo below who they said is sought in connection with an assault on a female police officer that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Thursday, Oct. 31, at around 6.10 p.m., a female police officer was conducting a lawful traffic stop in the vicinity of Risse Street and Jerome Avenue when an unidentified assailant came from behind and struck the police officer with a closed fist on the back of her head. They said the assailant then fled on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) in an unknown direction to parts unknown and the police officer was treated on scene but was not



taken to hospital.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypd-online.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Patrol Borough: Bronx Precinct: 052

CompStat Book Week of 11/04/24 - 11/10/24

		28 Day		Year to Date			
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	10	9	11.1 %
Rape	100.0 %	7	5	40.0 %	40	32	25.0 %
Robbery	-14.3 %	44	38	15.8 %	463	402	15.2 %
Felony Assault	22.2 %	46	56	-17.9 %	686	596	15.3 %
Burglary	-75.0 %	14	26	-46.2 %	175	197	-11.2 %
Grand Larceny	25.0 %	76	47	61.7 %	765	628	21.6 %
Grand Larceny Auto	16.7 %	33	22	50.0 %	311	296	5.4 %
Total	2.1 %	220	194	13.4 %	2,450	2,158	13.5 %
Patrol	0.0 %	215	187	15.0 %	2,404	2,108	14.0 %
Transit	33.3 %	5	7	-28.6 %	42	45	-6.7 %
Housing	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	4	5	-20.0 %
Shooting Victims	0.0 %	1	1	0.0 %	36	15	140.0 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	1	1	0.0 %	21	12	75.0 %
UCR Rape*	0.0 %	10	10	0.0 %	60	57	5.3 %
Other Sex Crimes	0.0 %	5	7	-28.6 %	95	88	8.0 %
Petit Larceny	-4.3 %	144	167	-13.8 %	1,607	2,228	-27.9 %
Misd. Assault	75.0 %	79	56	41.1 %	778	711	9.4 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	1	3	-66.7 %	4	3	33.3 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	3	5	-40.0 %

All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Data Summary as of 6/13/17.  
\* Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSPL) definitions.  
\* Unlawful Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape.

Source: NYPD

**MAJOR CRIME STATISTICS** for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for the 28-day period ending Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (left), and year-to-date major crime statistics for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct as of Nov. 10, 2024, compared to last year (right).

## More Brush Fires in VCP as Mayor Bans Grilling in Public Parks

(continued from page 12)

lands was core to VCPA's mission, and it would be assessing the damage and starting the work of stabilizing the area and restoring it with native plantings as soon as possible. "For those who are able, we appreciate your contribution of any size to help with these efforts," she said, sharing

the group's link for donations.

"We will also provide volunteer opportunities to support our woodland work," she added. "Please also use your voice to advocate for a fully funded NYC Parks budget, which is critical for keeping our city's green spaces thriving."

(continued on page 14)



Image courtesy of the Citizens App

**A BRUSH FIRE** is seen at West 167th Street near Sedgwick Avenue in the Highbridge section of The Bronx on Friday night, Nov. 8, 2024.



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## Public and Community Meetings

The next 52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meeting will take place on Thursday, Nov. 21, at 6 p.m. at St. Brendan's Convent, 260 E 207<sup>th</sup> St., Bronx, NY 10467. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7) general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 19 at 6.30 p.m. at Bronx Library Center, 310 East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8 full board (hybrid) meeting will be held in December (date tbc). Contact [BX08@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:BX08@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

The BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (lobby floor). For more details, please contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## CORRECTIONS

In the Oct. 31-Nov. 13, 2024, edition of the *Norwood News*, in the story published on page 9, "Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Returns," a reference was made to an October 2024 rally held in Manhattan outside Trump Tower attended by several Bronx elected officials and others. In fact, the Manhattan rally in question held on Oct. 28 was not held outside Trump Tower but at La Marqueta in East Harlem. A previous rally was held outside Trump Tower in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in September 2017 and was attended by many of the same Bronx elected officials.

As some of the information shared at the Bronx Community Board 7 Veterans Affairs meeting held on Oct. 16 was misinterpreted and published in our page 3 story in the same Oct. 31-Nov. 13, 2024, edition, for clarity, we have republished a revised version of the story in this week's edition, again on page 3. We apologize for these errors.

## More Brush Fires in VCP as Mayor Bans Grilling in Public Parks

(continued from page 13)

City officials said DEP Police and staff from DEP's Bureau of Water Supply joined with local and state first responders in fighting wildfires in and near the upstate watershed in recent weeks, pursuant to their responsibility to protect New York City's sources of water.

They said that included fighting a 400-acre wildfire which was still burning on Nov. 9 in the New York City watershed in Ulster County, using DEP

Police helicopters for rapid and effective response in forested areas, and assisting firefighting efforts in adjacent areas. They said while these efforts are critical in protecting New York City's drinking water reservoirs and surrounding lands, they also put further strain on New York City's water supply, increasing the importance of conservation efforts and efforts to prevent forest fires.

For more tips, visit [DEP's Water Savings Tips website](http://DEP's Water Savings Tips website).



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# NWBCCC Goes Bronxwide

(continued from page 1)

fight for racial justice and economic democracy through intergenerational community organizing to transform The Bronx and beyond,” according to its website.

Sandra Lobo, executive director, said in part, “All of these projects point to the alternative future we are creating, a future where the people of The Bronx hold power, ownership, and governance, over the places we live, work, send our children to school, where we start businesses, and where we raise our families.”

She continued, “But to truly realize this vision, we have to scale our efforts, expand our capacities, and chart a bold new path that meets the demands of this moment. That is why I am incredibly excited to announce tonight that the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition is merging with the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative.”

BCDI is “a community-led effort to build an equitable, sustainable, and democratic local economy that creates wealth and ownership for low-income people of color — what we call economic democracy.”

NWBCCC co-founded BCDI a decade ago and has collaborated with it since its inception. “Tonight, we’re not just here to celebrate our organization, we’re here to honor the movement that we’ve all been a part of, and the communities that have been at the heart of our work for the last 50 years,” Lobo said.

For her part, Lucia Gomez, political director of NYC Central Labor Council, said, “Every day, I see working people in The Bronx, and every day,

I know there is a transition to be made where it all counts: in communities.”

Among other achievements, between 1999 and 2001, NWBCCC’s youth arm, Sistas and Brothas United (SBU), was founded to fight for quality public schools, among other measures, securing \$2 million in capital projects for Kennedy High School in Marble Hill.

From 2004 to 2005, NWBCCC campaigned against the construction of the Croton Water Filtration Project. Though the project went ahead, the group secured some victories around various watershed protections, a smaller plant footprint, and underground construction.

Between 2006 and 2007, NWBCCC campaigned to transform the Old Fordham Library Building, located at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor into a youth, art and technology center, securing a \$1 million funding commitment from local leaders at the time.

Over the decades, NWBCCC worked with other organizations to pass the Community Reinvestment Act, which mandates banks and the federal government to reinvest in communities devastated by policy decisions.

The group’s Living Wage NYC Coalition worked to pass legislation that required economic development projects that receive city subsidies to pay living wages to their workers, and NWBCCC also worked to get laws passed that dramatically strengthened NYS rent laws and tenant protections.

Between 2015 and 2016, NWBCCC supported parents at P.S. 51 in Belmont on a campaign which resulted in the



Photo by Síle Moloney (

**L TO R**) WANDA SALAMAN, PRESIDENT, Sandra Lobo, executive director, and Margaret Groarke, treasurer of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC), were each honored at the organization’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala held at Manhattan College in Fieldston on Friday, Oct. 18, 2024.

City Council passing legislation which mandated schools to promptly inform parents about any potential health hazards caused by school buildings or sites. It also lobbied to ensure that Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr were declared official school holidays and campaigned for State funding for the Medicaid program.

NWBCCC has also founded research institutions, campaigned for affordable housing, designed and opened schools, stewarded parks and community gardens, and established a Community Land Trust. It also created, with others, “the Bronxwide Plan” a social, political, and educational process to develop a shared vision for the borough based on grassroots leadership, thinking long-term and developing a shared strategy.

In 2013, with the redevelopment of the City-owned Kingsbridge Armory, located at West Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, NWBCCC worked tirelessly to broker a historic, first-of-its-kind community benefits agreement (CBA) with the developer for the then-planned and now abandoned Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) project.

While its protected status as a historical building limits what the armory can be used for, the CBA included a promise of 50,000 square feet of space for community use, living wage jobs, local hiring and contracting, and local procurement and technical assistance for small

local businesses. At least 51 percent of the resulting jobs were set to be filled by the local community.

The City of New York announced in late 2021 that the KNIC project would not be proceeding due to concerns over the ability of the developer to finance the project [something the developer denied]. NWBCCC in conjunction with NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has since held numerous “Together for Kingsbridge” workshops to gather input from the community of what they would like to see implemented at the armory.

The vision plan based on the feedback was shared with prospective bidders/developers during a Request for Proposal (RFP) process last year, the deadline for which was Jan. 18. The project was boosted by funding announced in August 2023 of \$200 million from the City and State.

At the Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) Land Use meeting in March, an EDC representative said the selected developer and project would be made by the end of the year.

As part of the celebration, six leaders who each made their mark with NWBCCC over the decades were recognized for their contributions. Wanda Salaman, Fran Fuselli, Milly Silva, Nick Iuviene, Yorman Nuñez, and Christine Marinoni were each praised and presented with plaques for their commitment and support. Nuñez and Iuviene co-founded BCDI.

“I am so happy that Northwest Bronx is going Bronxwide because that’s been a fight for me that I’ve been trying to make happen for a long time,” Nuñez said. “I’m also happy that Northwest Bronx, as we do this, will be integrating the tools of organizing and economic development.”

Meanwhile, Iuviene said, “Northwest Bronx has endured as a bold and innovative institution without losing its foundational values. It invested in our nascent and some quixotic notions that led to the creation of the BCDI. It also created institutional space to test our ideas, partnered with others around The Bronx, and contributed in shaping and directing the path of BCDI in powerful ways.”

Marinoni spoke of wins attained over time in how public school funding is calculated and said the organizing skills she learned at NWBCCC stayed with her throughout her career. She gave a shout out to NWBCCC’s Mary Daly.

In introducing Salaman, president of the NWBCCC board, the presenter hailed her efforts in suing an organic fertilizer company and a processing plant, among other wins. Salaman, nicknamed “Wandawoman,” who is also executive director of “Mothers on the Move,” spoke of the importance of recognizing the work of organizers which she said was often carried out in the background.

Among the guests, which comprised about 250-300 people was former *Norwood News* editor Jordan Moss, who has covered the Kingsbridge Armory’s evolution over decades. Also present was actress and former Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Cynthia Nixon, who was accompanying her wife, honoree, Marinoni.

There was also a silent auction with items like Fordham University Men’s Basketball tickets, NWBCCC gear, and Bronx photographs up for grabs. Surprise awards were later presented to both Lobo and to Margaret Groarke, NWBCCC treasurer, for their leadership and dedication down through the years. Of Lobo, the presenter said in part, “Sandra has a bold vision that has pushed us all thinking beyond fighting back against bad policies, bad practices, and bad actors.”

Lobo concluded, “Our coalition was born out of a determination to fight for justice, to take control of the future, and to build power where it was needed most.”

*\*Síle Moloney contributed to this story.*



Photo by Síle Moloney

**HONOREE, CHRISTINE MARINONI** (right) attends the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition at Manhattan College in Fieldston on Friday, Oct. 18, 2024, accompanied by her wife, actress Cynthia Nixon (center). They are pictured with another colleague.

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